

Gifted Newsletter- Fall 2019

In 2019-2020, LDMS continues its journey to refine what education for our top students looks like. In addition to the high school and advanced courses that we offer in mathematics, foreign language, and world history, teachers in all content areas are focusing on ways to increase opportunities for students to engage in innovative learning tasks that provide deeper levels of authentic learning. Teachers are working to replicate real-world experiences in their teaching and testing through incorporating Performance Based Learning & Assessments into all classes. By setting and completing personal PBL/A goals, all teachers are demonstrating their commitment to deepening the quality of student learning. Additionally, teachers are collecting examples of this PBL/A work in student portfolios in preparation for Academic Showcase night in April, when student can share their work with families and the community.

This fall, LDMS faculty are also beginning to incorporate newly purchased ChromeBooks and G-Suite products into classes and instruction, as the school prepares for full implementation of one to one technology for the 2020-21 school year. Faculty and staff are completing in-service training and pursuing Google certifications as ways to better understand and embrace the ways that technology can enhance daily instruction and student learning.

In addition, after school enrichment and extension opportunities have changed some this year. The complete [extracurricular guide](#) can be found on the school website under the information tab. Notable changes for the gifted population include the following.

- LDMS has begun a Science Fair Club this year. Seven students passionate about science have chosen topics that interest them, researched these topics and begun the experimental design process on their interest topics. This club meets the first Tuesday of each month from 3:00-4:00. As students prepare their independent projects for our January school science fair, they are supported by Mrs. Swenty, Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Joyner and Mr. Clark.
- Our new National History Day Club is a great opportunity for LDMS students to research a topic of their choosing, create a research product, and then take it to competition at regional, state, and national levels. Club sponsors, Mrs. Conway and Ms. Cox, assist members in their research, but the project is student driven. Imagine the club as science fair for history.
- This year, Sarah Feyen has taken over sponsorship of the Math Club. Math Club started October 15th and is meeting every Wednesday from 3:10- 3:45 pm in her room. As part of the National Math Club, students will explore math in a fun, non-competitive way together. Club members will play games or solve puzzles or take on new challenges together. See www.mathcounts.org for more information.
- The LDMS Beta Club is preparing to induct 30 new members on October 29th---these seventh and eighth grade students have demonstrated academic excellence, good classroom citizenship and a willingness to serve the community. Members of the club will be involved in many local service opportunities in the weeks to come and they look forward to sending a competition team to the Junior Beta Club State Convention in February.
- The Word Nerd Herd -- the student book club -- returns this year, meeting one Tuesday a month to discuss recent Young Adult literature. The club is currently on its third book -- *Stella by Starlight* by Sharon Draper. Mrs. Bridge would love for any and all students to join the Word Nerd Herd for future meetings!

Special Events:

- This fall, 68 students and 6 LCS teachers ventured to the Chesapeake Bay for an outdoor learning adventure. Once on the islands, students participated in hands-on learning about the ecosystem and island communities on the bay. While using inquiry-based learning techniques and S.T.E.M. practices, students explored wetlands, underwater grass beds, oyster reefs, and open bay by foot, canoe, and jet boat. Students wrote in their journal about their experience and learning and in the coming months will participate in a give-back project to help protect the bay. Ask a student about playing light baseball at your house!
- Students will receive a letter with their report card inviting them to the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC8) contest at VMI. The permission form needs to be returned to Mrs. Hall before or after school. The letter includes information about the contest and a schedule of the practice times if students want to see what the contest questions are like before the contest. Parent volunteers are needed to help with the practice times and chaperons are needed for the contest.

Notes from the classroom:

- Students who did not go on the bay trip got the chance to dive deep in their social studies. Eighth grade world history students researched one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World and created visual displays to share their findings. Ms. Cox's seventh grade civics students participated in a class simulation in which they colonized the moon, declared independence, and wrote a constitution.
- LDMS science students have been thriving as teachers reinvigorate the science curricula in order to emphasize more hands on learning. Eighth Graders have been investigating the Law of Conservation of Matter, Boyle's Law and Charles's Law through hands on lab experiences, including one where they designed their own labs to investigate the topic. Seventh grade life science students have been thoroughly investigating the cellular world through the use of compound microscopes. Students have had the opportunity to view plant and animal cells in addition to exploring more in depth on their own with the microscopic world around them.
- English 6 Writers have launched the writing workshop by setting up their personal writing notebooks, crafting personalized dividers for specified sections, designing illustrated views of writing workshop procedures and expectations, and building their writing territories. In the weeks ahead, they will be delving into writing narrative nonfiction, poetry, and friendly letters.
- Seventh Grade English students are working in small groups on a biography writing project. The groups are using multi-media resources for research and will work collaboratively on the writing and revising process.
- In addition to curricular language work, Latin II and Latin I Part 2 students reimagined the ancient Greek and Roman gods in the world today by creating social media pages, designing homes, and creating websites for the Olympians. Latin I Part 1 students designed and presented models of Roman clothing to show their understanding of how the ancient Romans dressed.
- Spanish II class met the challenge of "surviving" a week in Costa Rica by researching travel plans online, "purchasing" tickets for flights, hotels, excursions, and making meal plans for their time in Costa Rica. They have put together slide shows narrated in the past tense about their experience in the Costa Rican culture. Students have worked in "tribes" in an experience loosely based on the TV show *Survivor*. The work and products have been excellent, and students are growing in proficiency.